

Press Release

HARFORD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Department of Community Services



PUBLIC SAFETY

"Ensuring a Safe
Harford"

EDUCATION

"Preparing Now,
Building for the Future"

EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

"Governing Smarter"

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

"Growing and Sustaining
Harford's Prosperity"

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

"Protecting Our
Environment"

QUALITY LIVING

"Safeguarding What is
Important to Harford
County Citizens"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 3, 2013

Media Contact: Elizabeth S. Hendrix, Director – 410-638-3389

Helping Eradicate Homelessness

Annual Homeless Count to Take Place in Harford County

On Thursday, January 24, 2013, local homeless service providers, community volunteers, local police agencies, and the Harford County Government will come together in a coordinated effort to conduct a one day count of homeless persons in Harford County.

Like many communities, Harford County has many who are living in places not meant for human habitation; outside and unsheltered, or who are relying daily on some form of emergency housing. Conducting a count of the homeless in the community will not only help determine how many are homeless, but it will also help us to understand the underlying issues that have contributed to the person becoming homeless. Collecting good data, characteristics, and service needs of the homeless in the community will allow local human service providers to obtain the necessary information to effectively plan programs to eradicate homelessness in Harford County.

Physical and mental health treatment, addictions services, employment readiness training, job placement, credit repair and life skills training are among some of the services a homeless person or family will need as they work toward self-sufficiency. Evaluating data that is collected during this point-in-time count will help identify where gaps in services may exist in order to work toward filling those gaps.

To donate blankets, hats, gloves, water bottles or personal care items, or to help pack bag lunches for the homeless, please contact the Harford Roundtable Homeless Count sub-committee at 410-638-3389 during business hours (8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.), Monday through Friday.

Each year, the Harford County Department of Community Services works with community and faith-based agencies to help families avoid homelessness. When tough times happen to families, the department works with partners to make sure funding can be accessed at various locations throughout the County. Through partnerships, homeless individuals and families are able to develop life skills, access employment opportunities, and achieve self-sufficiency by obtaining safe, affordable housing. The Department also helps divert individuals with mental health issues away from the criminal justice system and into treatment, which reduces recidivism and increases stability.

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Harford County currently has thirteen (13) emergency, transitional and permanent supportive shelters, offering a total of 259 beds for homeless adults, children and families. In fiscal year 2012, Harford County provided 997 people with 63,261 emergency shelter or transitional housing bed nights, for an average stay of 37 nights per person. In 2012, the Harford County Department of Community Services provided more than \$1 million in homeless program funding, which assisted such organizations as Alliance, Inc., Faith Communities and Civic Agencies United, Inc. (FCCAUI), Associated Catholic Charities Inc. /Anna's House, the Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center(SARC),Homecoming Project, Inc. and Harford Family House, Inc.

It takes a community to make a difference. Homeless citizens are among the most vulnerable population we strive to serve. They struggle with multiple barriers, which impede their ability to meet their own needs at every level. Many are physically, emotionally, and/or mentally disabled, and because of this, are more susceptible to becoming victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Working with key partners, including FCCAU, SARC, Anna's House, Harford Family House, Homecoming Projects, Inc., and Alliance, Inc., Harford County is making a difference in serving these vulnerable citizens.

Other agencies within the community that support low-income residents include the Harford Community Action Agency (HCAA), Inner-County Outreach, Inc., Mason-Dixon Community Services, Tabitha's House, F.I.S.H., St. Joan of Arc, St. Frances de Sales, the Salvation Army of Harford County, and many other civic agencies and churches. This group covers a wide array of essential services such as food banks and soup kitchens, eviction prevention and rental support, clothing closets and furniture/household materials, school and infant supplies, utility assistance and job training.

To learn more about homeless services in Harford County, visit www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/homeless, or call the Department of Community Services at 410-638-3389.